

## Responses to Questions on the Notice of Funding Opportunity

**Last Update: December 23, 2016: Please note a clarification to Q.24.**

**Update: December 16, 2016: Please note a corrected response to Q.38.**

**1. To what extent must organizations provide specific CVs for key personnel in their proposals?**

Under “Organizational Capacity and Staffing”, the guidance states that the applicant must submit a CV for the Chief of Party or Country Director but that CVs for other key personnel (e.g., for Monitoring and Evaluation, Finance) are not required as part of the proposal submission. The organizational chart must however include the following key personnel positions: Chief of Party/Country Director, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, and Finance Director.

**2. Is a cost-share arrangement required or recommended?**

While cost sharing is not required, it is encouraged to maximize program impacts and make progress towards achieving in-country sustainability. Applicants must identify and explain any cost sharing in the budget narrative. Applicants must document any non-Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) cash or non-cash contributions accordingly on the Standard Form 424 (SF-424) with their proposal submission, as per 7 CFR 1599.4(d) (7). If an award is made, the applicant will be responsible for providing these resources. These resources will not be borne by CCC funding.

**3. Are both Food for Education and Food for Progress award solicitations due on January 19th or January 24th 2017? The solicitation synopses differ from the actual solicitation.**

The grants.gov synopses of the funding opportunities display both an original closing date and a current closing date. Please follow the current closing date of “Jan 19, 2017.” This date applies to both Food for Education and Food for Progress solicitations.

**4. Per FFE solicitation, Part III – Eligibility Criteria on p.9 of the RFA states: “In accordance with the McGovern-Dole Regulations (7 CFR 1599.3), a private voluntary organization, a cooperative, or another organization that is not an intergovernmental organization is eligible to submit an application to become a recipient under McGovern-Dole.” Are UN agencies considered “intergovernmental organizations,” and therefore not eligible to apply under this opportunity?**

UN agencies are considered intergovernmental organizations. The solicitation is being amended to be consistent with the statute for the McGovern-Dole program, which allows intergovernmental organizations to participate in McGovern-Dole solicitations.

- 5. On page three of the notice it says that FAS “anticipates awards ranging from \$20-30 million” (for five year durations), but then says that the “award figures reflect the total amount of the award, while the operating budgets for proposed cooperative agreements should be based on the anticipated monetization proceeds and any administrative funds requested by the recipient.” Hypothetically, if an applicant submitted a budget grand total of \$25 million comprising \$22.5 million in estimated proceeds and \$2.5 million in administrative costs would this be considered within the \$20–\$30 million range? Or, does the \$20–\$30 range cover only USDA’s costs for (both) purchase of commodities and ocean freight?**

The \$20–\$30 million range includes all costs—commodities, ocean freight, and any CCC funds awarded for administrative costs—not just the operating budget.

- 6. What is the overall cap for administrative costs in the FY 2017 Food for Progress solicitation?**

FAS estimates that approximately \$10 million will be available for administrative funds under the Food for Progress awards.

- 7. In terms of experience working in a particular country, our *organization* has no direct experience although we are putting forward individual staff members and an in-country organization (sub-recipient) with experience. How will USDA evaluate our eligibility to apply and can you provide a justification?**

In the proposal under “Organizational Capacity and Staffing”, the applicant should describe their experience implementing similar projects and the experience of its staff. In addition, the applicant should address the experience of subrecipients who will be implementing the project. In the scoring process used to evaluate applications, USDA will consider the in-country experience of the prime applicant, relevant experience in other countries, and also factor in the experience of subrecipient partners. Please refer to the guidance in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NoFO), pages 12–13.

- 8. Is a public/state-controlled institute of higher education eligible to apply?**

According to General Counsel, public and private universities are eligible to apply for McGovern Dole funding.

- 9. Our organization is interested in providing overarching technical assistance for all the programs that are awarded through “knowledge management strategies” that support the development of a strong community of practice. Does the NOFO support this type of assistance?**

The purpose of funding for the McGovern Dole Program is found on page 4 of the NoFO. Proposals which outline solutions to these issues will score higher during the review process. Proposals with the highest review scores are then funded.

- 10. How will USDA evaluate applications for programs in countries that are not on the list of “priority countries and regions”?**

Applicants are welcome to submit a proposal for countries outside the list of “priority countries and regions”, along with a justification for the need for such a program in accordance with guidance in the NoFO. However, the competition for funding is strong and because of budget constraints, USDA funds approximately only 25 percent of the proposals received.

In developing a list of priority countries and regions for a fiscal year, USDA aligns with its strategic plan and uses input from U.S. embassies. USDA also takes into consideration synergies with other U.S. government programs underway in countries and regions, and seeks to reduce duplication of effort.

**11. Could USDA clarify what is different in the McGovern-Dole Strategic Objective 2, as the Results Framework does not appear to have changed from previous years?**

USDA added the word “nutrition” in the title of Strategic Objective 2. USDA has enhanced guidance to emphasize the importance of providing nutritious meals. When proposals are being evaluated a full five percent of the final score is allocated to the section on nutrition. Please see Q. 113.

**12. What exactly is meant by “Local Capacity Building” in the Strategic Analysis section of the NoFO (page 11)? Is USDA seeking information on capacity building of indigenous institutions, local communities and governments (similar to “Organizational Capacity and Staffing” (page 12)?**

Local Capacity Building must be distinguished from Organizational Capacity and Staffing. Organizational Capacity and Staffing refers to the applicant’s own organizational capacity and staffing plan. Local Capacity Building refers to building the capacity of local institutions to carry forward the school feeding program after USDA resources are withdrawn.

**13. If only two Past Performance Reports (PPR) are allowed per application, should one of them be for a literacy/education-focused sub-recipient? (It would seem to follow given that the NoFO page 17 states, “If the education and literacy activity is conducted by a sub-contractor or subrecipient, submission of the sub-contractor or subrecipient’s relevant past performance is strongly encouraged.”**

The applicant must decide how to demonstrate evidence of strong experience. There is no further guidance on what kinds of PPRs are required.

**14. Given that there are no explicit sections on security concerns in the proposal, could USDA please provide some guidance as to what information it would like to see included in risk mitigation and organizational operation plans?**

The applicant should provide information on how the project team will be able to address cases of theft, losses, security, and other cases of likely disruptions in the project.

**15. Is monetization is a requirement for eligibility? Can applicants submit an application/proposal without considering monetization?**

Monetization is not a requirement for the McGovern-Dole program.

**16. Is the estimated award size on page 9 of the NoFO inclusive of the value of commodity and/or ocean freight costs?**

Yes that is correct.

**17. Will USDA make a calculator available for applicants to estimate the costs of commodity and ocean shipping when preparing their program budgets?**

No formal calculator is provided. However, applicants are welcome to seek commodity pricing estimates from USDA Food Aid Division's Transportation and Logistics Branch when assembling proposal budgets. (E-mail: [ppded@fas.usda.gov](mailto:ppded@fas.usda.gov))

**18. The NoFO guidelines (pp 49) indicates "Targeted Areas: Southern Region" of Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Also, "In 2012, southern Mauritania witnessed an influx of refugees fleeing the conflict in northern Mali." Based on this description, we would like to confirm our understanding that you mean the geographical area located in the southern part of Mauritania along its borders with Senegal and Mali. The area that has been affected by the influx of Malian refugees is Hodh ech-Chargui region (below the 18° north latitude).**

Your understanding is correct.

**19. When proposing a multi-year program should a separate budget for each year be included (in other words, three budgets for a 3-year program)? If three budgets are to be included, should there be a budget narrative for each yearly budget?**

A separate budget is not necessary for each year. Instructions regarding the proposed budget can be located on page 9 of the Food for Progress NoFO and on page 18 of the McGovern Dole NoFO. Additional guidance is located in Appendix G of both NoFOs and example of a budget narrative is posted on the FAIS web page (<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/fais/public> ).

**20. Part III – Eligibility Criteria on page 9 of the NoFO states: "In accordance with the McGovern-Dole Regulations (7 CFR 1599.3), a private voluntary organization, a cooperative, or another organization that is not an intergovernmental organization is eligible to submit an application to become a recipient under McGovern-Dole." Are UN agencies considered "intergovernmental organizations," and therefore not eligible to apply under this opportunity?**

UN agencies are considered intergovernmental organizations and are eligible for funding under the solicitation.

**21. With the increased focus on nutrition in McGovern-Dole, can organizations include ready to eat foods in their proposals?**

At this time, no. We can only call forward commodities which are on our officially approved list. The official list of commodities is developed with input from numerous food technologists and other experts who assess which meet the nutrition requirements of our program. (The list is found in the [slides from the Townhall Meeting on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>](#), they are posted on the FAIS Web site (<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/fais/public>).)

**22. Can our proposals also include nutritionally rich foodstuffs such as orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, which are locally sourced?**

Funding under McGovern-Dole can be used only to purchase US commodities. Some existing programs do include activities involving local food commodities (e.g. supplemental school gardens), and we recognize the added value of such activities. An applicant needs to be mindful when describing such activities in their proposals that these additional locally-sourced foods need to be tracked and their impacts need to be monitored closely.

**23. Is there a preferred template that USDA would like applicants to use for PPRs?**

Yes. A blank PPR has been posted to the FAIS Web site (<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/faiss/public>). Send the blank PPR (MS Word document) to the reference to be completed.

**24. For consortiums of organizations submitting an application together, does the allowable number of PPRs apply to the whole consortium or to each consortium member?**

Submit PPRs only for the prime organization. The PPR requirement refers to the applicant, the main recipient of funding. The limit of three PPRs references the main applicant's past work, not subrecipients' past work. (Also see Question 120.)

**25. Please confirm that there is no page limit on the introduction and strategic analysis sections.**

The introduction should be limited to one paragraph. The strategic analysis has no specified page limit. It must address the requirements as stated in the NoFO.

**26. Page 9, Part IV B, 6. PVO Budget section of the NoFO states that a detailed budget is not required. On page 93, the list of required attachments includes mention of a detailed budget. Can USDA clarify if a detailed budget is required as part of the proposal?**

Applicants are required to upload a budget summary and budget narrative as part of their proposal. The requirements for the detailed budget in FAIS have been greatly reduced.

**27. We kindly request USDA provide FSN pay scale for Sri Lanka.**

Salaries for local and international staff are primarily dictated by PVOs' internal human resources policies. If additional requirements exist in the respective country, it is incumbent on the implementing organization's to apply local law.

**28. On page 2 of the NoFO, the “estate sector” is listed as a region in Sri Lanka. Please clarify the geographical scope of this region and which districts are included.**

The “Estate Sector” includes plantations that are more than 20 acres in size and have 10 or more residential employees, as defined by the Sri Lankan Department of Census and Statistics. Sabaragamuwa, Central, and Uva provinces have relatively high shares of the country’s Estate Sector population. Applicants should include justification for selected provinces in their strategic analysis.

**29. The only page limit listed in the NoFO appears to be for the evaluation plan (10 pages). Are there any page limits for the attachments?**

The evaluation plan is the only item in the attachments that has a page restriction. However, there is a 5,000 character limit on each text section in FAIS in the “Special Needs & Distribution Methods” section.

**30. On page 6, the NoFO states Project-Level Results Frameworks should “identify critical assumptions.” Does this mean that our critical assumptions must be displayed within the results framework graphic (there isn’t enough space because activities have to be placed in the results framework as well), or can the critical assumptions be discussed in the strategic analysis?**

Please include your critical assumptions in the results framework document, perhaps on a second page to leave space for the graphic and associated activities on the first page. Critical assumptions will be considered alongside the results framework, so describing them in any other section is not recommended.

**31. Why is Olancho included twice in the context of Dry Beans? Did you mean to include another department?**

Olancho was mistakenly added twice in the list of priority sectors, so consider that a typo.

**32. La Paz Department is mentioned in the proposal as prioritized by USDA but was not included in the table of priority regions for Food for Progress FY2017 funds. Does USDA intend to fund coffee, beans and/or horticulture in La Paz during this cycle?**

La Paz is not considered a priority region for the targeted value chains in Honduras in the FY2017 Food for Progress NoFO. The department of La Paz was identified as a Feed the Future priority region and included as a reference only.

**33. Please confirm the due date (there have been two proposed dates).**

January 19, 2017 at 5 pm EST.

**34. Does horticulture includes perennial tree fruits?**

Yes, the priority sector area of horticulture includes perennial tree fruits.

**35. On page 52 of the NoFO, under the Sri Lanka country guidance, the guidance states "Proposals should target Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka and may also focus on the Estate Sector and Monaragala District." Please clarify if "Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka" refers to "Northern Province" and "Eastern Province" or generally the Northern and Eastern provinces (e.g. Northern, North Central, and North Western in the North).**

The Sri Lanka guidance language "Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka" refers to provinces in the north and east generally.

**36. Regarding the FY2017 budget, are applicants able to split specific line item costs between both Administration and Activities in the budget narrative?**

Yes, USDA has provided a budget narrative example on the FAIS Web site to illustrate how this may be done (<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/faiss/public>.) Please also refer to the detailed guidance in the NoFO.

**37. The organizational chart must include the following key personnel positions: Chief of Party/Country Director, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, and Finance Director. Would FAS accept if these positions were unnamed and listed as TBD in the organizational chart?**

Yes.

**38. Page 5 of the NoFO states that each application must include the following sections:1) Introduction and Strategic Analysis; 2) Project-level Results Framework(s); 3) Plan of Operation and Activities; 4) Sustainability and Lasting Impact; 5) Organizational Capacity and Staffing; 6) Budget; 7) Commodity Management; 8) Monitoring and Evaluation and 9) Other Details. However, on page 27, Appendix A - Application Content Checklist for Submitting Proposals in FAIS, section 3. The "Introduction Section" states that the Introduction and Strategic Analysis should be uploaded as an attachment. And that the document contains the following sections: - One paragraph summary of proposed project; - In-Country Registration Status; - Organizational Capability; - Lasting Impact.**

**Should the organizational capability and lasting impact section be separate sections, as specified on page 5 of the RFA, or should they be included within the "Introduction and Strategic Analysis" document, as specified on page 27, Appendix A, section 3 of the RFA?**

As described on page 5 of the NoFO, "Each application must include the following sections: 1) Introduction and Strategic Analysis; 2) Project-level Results Framework(s); 3) Plan of Operation and Activities; 4) Sustainability and Lasting Impact; 5) Organizational Capacity and Staffing; 6) Budget; 7) Commodity Management; 8)



Monitoring and Evaluation and (9) Other Details.” These sections but may be uploaded to FAIS separately or combined into a single attachment.

Requirements for the Project-Level Results Framework are described on pages 5 and 6. Please refer to the NoFO for details.

**39. Please specify formatting requirements for applications documents (e.g. Times New Roman, size 11, etc.)**

USDA does not specify formatting requirements, but would appreciate a font size of 11–12 points with roughly one inch margins.

**40. Page 93 of the NoFO includes “references” in the list of required attachments (as part of 13. Generic). Can USDA please clarify what should be included as references?**

References are not required. If the applicant wishes to include more detailed information through additional documentation, those additional documents should be referenced throughout the proposal and attached as a “references” and uploaded and labeled with the ‘Generic’ type. This includes all other relevant, but not ‘required’, attachments to the proposal.

- 41. On page 18 of the NoFO, it states, “Applicants should consider allocating, at a minimum, three percent of the project budget toward monitoring and evaluation. The minimum three percent is *exclusive* (emphasis added) of the applicant’s M&E employee staff costs.” In this case, does the wording imply that the minimum three percent should be dedicated solely for evaluation and a separate percentage for monitoring? Or is the language intended to read “inclusive” rather than “exclusive”?**

The word “exclusive” is correct. It is not intended to differentiate between evaluation costs and monitoring costs, rather to exclude M&E employee staff costs from the three percent minimum. Examples of monitoring costs (exclusive of staffing) include costs for M&E tools, database systems, software, licenses, and tablets. Examples of evaluation costs (exclusive of staffing) include costs for hiring external evaluators and conducting special studies. These examples illustrate what may count towards the minimum three percent of the project budget (that excludes M&E employee staff costs).

- 42. Would USDA support sector development in a non-targeted region where the private sector is interested in expanding trade (in addition to the program focusing on target region(s))?**

Applications may propose work outside of the target regions, sectors, and countries identified in the solicitation, but those choices required more substantial justification through the strategic analysis. The proposal will be evaluated according to the same criteria as those aligned only with the target regions and sectors. Also note that the competition for funding is strong and because of budget constraints FAS generally only funds approximately 25 percent of the proposals received.

- 43. Can USDA clarify whether Plan of Operation and Activities should be uploaded as a generic attachment, or whether it should be included in the Introduction and Strategic Analysis attachment?**

In past years the information comprising the “Plan of Operation and Activities” has been entered into FAIS, rather than as an attachment. Use the same approach this year.

- 44. Can USDA please clarify whether Sustainability and Lasting Impact should be uploaded as a generic attachment, or whether it should be included in the Introduction and Strategic Analysis attachment?**

These documents can be entered as individual sections in one document, as discussed in the instructions in Appendix A.

**45. Can USDA please clarify whether Organizational Capacity and Staffing should be uploaded as a generic attachment, or should be included in the Introduction and Strategic Analysis attachment?**

These documents can be entered as individual sections in one document, as discussed in the instructions in Appendix A.

**46. The NoFO states that the monetization plan should address “customs, exemptions, import barriers, tariffs, port and warehousing capacity, handling concerns, packaging, etc.” Can the USDA approve the use of a through bill of lading for monetization sale if the monetization is in a landlocked country to include all ocean and inland freight costs involved in transporting the commodities from the U.S. load port to the destination country.**

The USDA cannot approve any requests as part of the initial review process. If the organization becomes an award recipient, then, after any such award has been fully signed off on and cleared, then at that time the organization may request such approvals for review.

**47. In the results framework, is it acceptable to map two or more activities to a single result?**

Yes, multiple activities can be mapped to a single result.

**48. In the results framework, is it acceptable to omit a foundational result?**

It is acceptable to omit a result (foundational or otherwise) only if that result is not necessary for the project because it is being addressed by another actor or is irrelevant in the particular context of the proposed project and location. The program-level results framework represents all of the interlinked components we believe are necessary for a successful project. However, when applying the program-level results framework to a proposed project in a specific location, an organization may propose that a particular result isn't necessary for their project to address, and should provide an explanation of why.

**49. Does USDA require any specific criteria or requirements for the Chief of Party position? Page 8 of the solicitation says “As part of the proposal, the applicant must attach the CV for the lead project manager (e.g., Chief of Party, Country Director) for the proposed project...The CV must clearly demonstrate the lead project manager’s relevant work experience and qualifications.”**

While the USDA cannot provide any specific criteria or requirements for the Chief of Party position, we would like to emphasize that this position must comply with the conflict of interest requirements located in 2 CFR 400.2. We will be assessing the Chief of Party’s relevant work experience and qualifications for achieving the proposal’s goals and outcomes.

**50. Page 2 of the RFA indicates that Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNPR are priority regions in Ethiopia. On page 37, USDA has also included Afar and Somali as targeted areas. Can USDA clarify which areas bidders should prioritize within Ethiopia?**

Different regions listed on both pages in the NoFO are priority regions for USDA in Ethiopia.

**51. On page 38 of the NoFO, USDA notes that "Expand trade of agricultural products in the livestock and poultry sector by introducing and expanding feedlot and dairy enterprises" is a priority. Can USDA define "agricultural products?" Is USDA's goal to expand trade of livestock feed or other products such as poultry, eggs, and dairy or all of the above?**

USDA's goal is improve all the sectors listed under # 1 and 2 on page 38.

**52. For which key personnel must organizations provide specific CVs in their proposals?**

Under "Organizational Capacity and Staffing", the guidance states that the applicant must submit a CV for the Chief of Party or Country Director but that CVs for other key personnel (e.g., for Monitoring and Evaluation, Finance) are not required as part of the proposal submission. The organizational chart must however include the following key personnel positions: Chief of Party/Country Director, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, and Finance Director.

**53. Is a cost-share arrangement required or recommended?**

While cost sharing is not required, it is encouraged to maximize program impacts and make progress towards achieving in-country sustainability. Applicants must identify and explain any cost sharing in the budget narrative. Applicants must document any none Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) cash or non-cash contributions accordingly on the Standard Form 424 (SF-424) with their proposal submission, as per 7 CFR 1599.4(d) (7). If an award is made, the applicant will be responsible for providing these resources. These resources will not be borne by CCC funding.

**54. Is USDA currently, or anticipating in the future, exploring or negotiating potential Food for Progress awards with any of the priority country national governments on the current FY17 priority country list?**

Foreign governments are not eligible award recipients under this funding announcement.

**55. For Cambodia, USDA has identified dairy as the focus area. However, the drop down activity menu is oriented to traditional field agriculture. How should we set up activities in this case: select the activity title that comes closest or create custom titles? For example, for the activity of setting up demonstration dairy farms would you prefer we select "demonstration plots" or create a custom indicator "demonstration dairy farm?"**

Applicants may select the activity titles that are closest to proposed activities as appropriate. If no adequate standard title exists, applicants may create custom titles. In either case, the Plan of Operation should include an in-depth description of each activity which will further clarify the activity title.

**56. When submitting a proposal for the SeGaBi region, which country should we select under the Introduction Details section on FAIS?**

Any of the countries within a region may be chosen as the identifier for the submission.

**57. With respect to percent of total budget allocated to different aspects of the McGovern-Dole program, on page 16 it states at least 10% of project resources must be used for literacy focused activities, and on page 26 that a minimum of 3% of project budget must be used for monitoring and evaluation. Are these percentages to be taken from the TOTAL cooperative agreement (\$10–\$20 million) which includes commodity purchase, ocean freight and the cash funds provided from USDA to the PVO? Or are the percentages to be taken only from the PVO's cash budget provided by USDA?**

The suggested budget allocation percentages for literacy and monitoring and evaluation activities in the NoFO are taken from the operating/program budget. It does not include the commodity and transportation costs.

**58. Are preschools eligible for the McGovern-Dole FY17 program?**

Yes, preschools are eligible for MGD FY17 program funding.

**59. Would it be acceptable to include information on In-Country Registration as a section in the Organizational Capacity and Staffing attachment (absent clear directive in the NoFO)?**

Yes

**60. Although gender is not directly mentioned in the solicitation, we assume that it is expected to be addressed in the proposal. How will gender be factored in the evaluation criteria to benefit the scoring of proposals?**

Applications will be evaluated only by the criteria described in the NoFO. These criteria include the strength of the strategic analysis and plan of operation. Strategic analyses are strengthened by incorporating various elements of the country and sector's context, such as gender. Strong plans of operation are informed by the strategic analyses, which may reveal strategic direction regarding gender.

**61. For Cambodia, the target area is defined as "regions with high potential for increased production." Given this, what level of collaboration with Feed the Future does USDA expect since current FtF activities are focused in the Northwest of the country and may not align with regions identified for the FFPr program?**

Although it is an FAS priority to collaborate with other U.S. government programs to the degree possible, applicants should choose targeted regions with the best interests of the program in mind. Applicants should include justification for selected provinces and information on how the project will coordinate with other stakeholders (including USG entities) in their strategic analysis.

**62. Can USDA confirm that an increase in production followed by a reduction in imports would be considered "expanded trade" within its SO2 Results Framework?**

An increase in production does not always equate to expanded trade. Please review the USDA Food for Progress standard indicators handbook, as it provides insights into how USDA measures progress on the SO2 Results Framework.

**63. Has USDA developed target numbers of beneficiaries it expects to be reached in any of the priority countries/regions?**

No. USDA expects applicants to come up with these target numbers based on their proposed activities and budget.

**64. Would USDA consider it appropriate to fund study tours (including regional travel) for beneficiaries and project stakeholders to visit neighboring countries in order to observe/study successful production techniques and best practices related to the priority sector?**

Yes, if a good justification is provided.

**65. The link to the SF-424 is expired. Where can we find this form?**

The SF-424 can be found at  
[http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424\\_Mandatory\\_1\\_2-V1.2.pdf](http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_Mandatory_1_2-V1.2.pdf)

**66. When you hit Submit for Review, can we put a cover letter in the comment box?**

FAD will not review such items that are not on the specified list of requirements in the NoFO.

**67. With regards to the monetization process, why do you recommend keeping in contact with the US Embassy and FAS Agricultural Attaches?**

We recommend communication with them on monetization activities so that they are aware in case challenges arise at port.

**68. Can we expect a prioritized list of learning agenda questions in time to include them in proposal evaluation plan?**

No, we are not prepared to provide such a list at this time.

**69. The solicitation asks for a Plan of Operation. Does this mean the Activity Descriptions in FAIS?**

Yes.

**70. For purposes of proposal evaluation, can 'fruits and vegetables' and 'organic' please be defined?**

Please research this on the USDA website.

**71. Can RUTF be used as a McGovern-Dole commodity?**

Please refer to the list in the [slides from the Townhall Meeting on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/fais/public), they are posted on the FAIS Web site (<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/fais/public>).

**72. Last year, FAS sponsored market analysis for specific countries, will this be done again?**

A significant budget was spent on those studies. The benefits of those studies will have to be weighed against our budget.

**73. Are midterm and final program evaluations made public?**

Not at this time but there are plans in place to make them public in the future possibly.

**74. Do we upload targets and indicators directly into FAIS?**

No, upload these as an attachment.

**75. Which curriculum vitae are required in the proposal?**

Only the Chief of Party is required but we'll review as many as you submit.

**76. Under what category to you upload Letters of Support?**

Under Generic. Please note the larger the file, the greater the chance of it being rejected. Please consider separating documents into smaller files.

**77. Under Key Personnel, are you expecting an exhaustive description of their responsibilities?**

No, a brief paragraph is sufficient. The section on organizational capacity will also have information related to the Chief of Party.

**78. Is there a character limit for activities?**

No, there is no limit because we want to allow for a thorough justification for doing an activity. It is recommended to copy/paste into this box.

**79. Should a geographic area be an attachment or in FAIS?**

Everything will be considered in the proposal review. In the past we've allowed participants to put information into different attachments rather than into FAIS.

**80. Do you read all documents submitted as part of a proposal?**

Yes, at the Food Assistance Division level, we read everything.

**81. Please clarify on the detailed budget?**

This is an FAIS term, and is only required this year if an award is made. It is a detailed MS Excel spreadsheet which closely mirrors the budget narrative.

**82. Does FAD have a preference between Word and PDF documents?**

No.

**83. How do you prefer NICRA agreements are uploaded?**

The NICRA agreement should be uploaded as an attachment.

**84. When you hit Submit for Review, can we put a cover letter in the comment box?**

We're not going to review that. We don't score items outside what the solicitation requires.



- 85. Page iii “Executive Summary” section states USDA/FAS expects to make “multiple 3-5 year awards....”. Page 4 states for new programming USDA seeks proposals for 5 year programs. Kindly clarify whether USDA is asking for applications for 3 year awards for continuation of programs and 5 year proposals for new programs.**

FAS seeks applications for programs that span up to 5 years. Regardless of the program duration, sustainability must be attained for program activities. It is not USDA’s intention to indicate a preference for the duration of new programs or continuation programs.

- 86. Where in the proposal should the description of proposed staffing pattern go? There are no sections for this in FAIS and other than an Organizational Chart, it is not mentioned as an attachment. Should a narrative be included with the Organization Chart?**

Narrative content must be included to support the Organization Chart. It may be included with the Organization Chart in additional pages, through a separate attachment, or as an additional section in the Introduction and Strategic Analysis document.

- 87. Is experience in country an eligibility requirement or will subrecipient eligibility be sufficient?**

We will consider the in country experience of the prime applicant in the scoring process and we will also factor in experience of subrecipient partners and relevant experience in other countries. Please can refer to the NoFO which includes the entire scoring guidance.

- 88. The priority countries for USAID Health projects often overlap with that of McGovern-Dole in the area of assistance to at risk adolescent girls. Would you consider using McGovern-Dole to encourage collaboration so that this vulnerable population is best served?**

The statute authorizing the MGD program requires FAS to establish preschool and school food for education programs in foreign countries to improve food security, reduce the incidence of hunger, and improve literacy and primary education, particularly with respect to girls. We are always looking for innovative ways to further enhance our work in this area, provided it remains within our regulations.

- 89. Thanks for linking the FAS Cochran Fellowship Program with McGovern-Dole to provide added benefit to ongoing school feeding programs. Would these types of cross-cutting programs be supported again in the future?**

Yes. We are supportive of using our programs to enhance the capacity of our other programs. It has been suggested that each country with a McGovern-Dole presence be provided with capacity building from other programs so that the overall sustainability be enhanced, however the budget for this must be judiciously considered.

**90. The budget narrative didn't give guidance on what to include for subrecipient budgets; what do you want to see there?**

As the responsibility over the subrecipient belongs to the prime award recipient, we are less concerned with this section of the budget narrative. The narrative should be brief and include who they are, the activities they will do for the prime, the total estimate budget. It is the prime's responsibility to approve and manage the subrecipient budgets.

**91. Does USDA have any guidance on how to breakdown a budget between the CCC and Monetization funds? This doesn't seem to be addressed in the solicitation.**

The CCC funds can only be used for administrative costs and are limited. You can split them within administration as the organization best sees fit.

**92. Please clarify that work with a monetization agent is a contract and thus should be treated according to the regulations on contracts?**

Yes, that is correct.

**93. Do we need to identify a monetization agent at the time of our proposal?**

No, you do not need to do that.

**94. Can the recipient provide sub awards to government entities?**

No.

**95. Why has the line item 'Other' been replaced by 'Supplies' in the Administration section of this year's Budget Summary?**

This change was made so that we would be in line with line item categories recognized by OMB. The change was made to properly define disposition of remaining items within the 'Supply' line at the end of an award. The value of remaining goods in this line item must be returned to FAS at the end of an award. Technically, training materials are supplies that the recipient will be using to train beneficiaries so the amount can be listed as supplies and explained in the budget narrative. However, if recipients have costs that don't meet any of the budget categories, please use "Other" and provide an explanation of the costs.

**96. Can the monetization agent be selected during the proposal stage or later?**

Our primary concern is that the monetization agent be selected through a competitive process. As long as the competitive process can be demonstrated it can happen during either stage.

**97. Are applicants able to split costs between the Administrative and Activity section of the budget narrative?**

No. We explain in the NoFO that costs associated with activities be counted as an activity and administrative costs be counted in administration. Costs should be applied to the appropriate section of the summary budget and described in the corresponding section in the narrative.

**98. In the past some salary costs have been split between “Administration” and “Activities”, can we continue to do that in this year’s proposals?**

This is not preferred, this year we are encouraging the COP’s salary entirely charged to the “Administration” section. The Deputy COP can be split. However, we recognize sometimes the COP is highly technical and can add value to activities if a portion of their time is dedicated to activities.

**99. Does the threshold for budgetary line item movements apply to the narrative budget or the summary budget?**

The threshold for line item movements applies to the Summary Budget. However remember to refer to the program regulations for what actions do still require prior approval.

**100. Does the Monitoring and Evaluation minimum budget guidance include the salaries for monitoring and evaluation staff?**

No it is exclusive of their salaries. It is intended to be a minimum recommendation for external evaluations, special studies and internal costs like building a monitoring system. However it is just a minimum; if a more involved evaluation is to be planned such as an impact evaluation, we would expect a more rigorous budget. (Also see Q.41 and Q.57)

**101. Where do program materials for activities fall within the budget narrative? This wasn’t described in the guidance.**

Program materials should be included categorized as supplies under the activity budget.

**102. Can you ship for other companies?**

No. We only ship for USDA programs.

**103. Does US have list of commodities approved by Government of Laos?**

No.

**104. Do we have to ship on 100% US Flag Carriers?**

Your proposal should plan for 100% of commodities to be shipped on US Flag carriers. The percentage within awarded projects may be adjusted through discussions with FAD, but ensure that your proposals account for 100% shipment on US Flag carriers.

**105. What will happen for ports not serviced by US Flag carriers?**

We have to follow the US cargo preference. We cannot discuss any specific exceptions at this time.

**106. For countries like Laos with a smaller economy- would you recommend 3<sup>rd</sup> country monetization if in country monetization is not possible? Alternatively would you recommend we look at smaller tranches of monetization over a longer period?**

Please pay attention to the NoFO which states that proposals should not be based on third country monetization.

**107. Can we expect further guidance on monetization to be published during this proposal period or does this public meeting serve in lieu of further guidance?**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to conduct research on both programmatic activities and monetization. It is incumbent on you to understand market conditions in the country of your proposal.

**108. Funding for these programs only covers commodity costs to the US port of discharge; what about landlocked countries such as Laos?**

This is a part of our program due to the finite amount of freight costs available to our program. This decision allows us to program more awards each year, and without it would limit us to awarding much fewer awards.

**109. Should we name a freight forwarder in our proposals?**

By all means, include as much information as possible in your proposal. More information allows us to assess competitive proposals more thoroughly.

**110. Are land locked countries excluded from monetization?**

No.

**111. Why were inland freight costs a part of earlier awards but are not now?**

That is historically correct, however the strategic objectives of our programs have shifted in recent years and this is no longer an option.

- 112. On page iii, section “New in FY2017”, of the MGD FY2017 solicitation, USDA states that “All proposals are required to address McGovern-Dole Strategic Objective 2, or SO2, in the recently revised Increased Use of Improved Health, Nutrition and Dietary Practices.” The Results Framework for SO2 appears to have no changes from last year. Can USDA indicate what was revised?**

The change made to the SO2 results framework itself is that USDA added the word ‘nutrition’ where relevant; the causal chains did not change.

USDA strengthened emphasis on nutrition in the MGD program in a number of ways, including: providing enhanced guidance to emphasize the importance of nutritious meals, requiring use of one or more custom indicators to track locally produced foods in school meals projects, updating the Indicator Handbook to include new indicators on nutrition training (see indicators related to nutrition training #19, #20, and #21 in the Indicators and Definition Handbook updated in August 2016), excluding the former Minimal Acceptable Diet indicator, and weighting the nutrition section of proposals independently (a full 5 percent) in our proposal scoring approach.

**113. The inland costs are a complicating factor in the commodity transportation process for Food for Progress. A third party steps in of necessity. Is it possible to do this differently?**

A third party transportation contractor must be used for inland transportation. Inland transportation contracts typically are negotiated once the awards have been issued, and after the commodity and freight are contracted. If you are a recipient of an award you will need to work with such a contractor.

The specification for a two-stage transportation costing break-out is necessitated by the finite amount of freight costs available to Food for Progress. It is important for the efficiency of our programs to know, when procuring the commodity, what the actual freight cost is. When evaluating proposals only freight costs are considered, to adjudicate fairly between all applications. This process also allows more awards to be made within the constraints of the finite freight apportionment available to our program.

**114. Is there a budget template that applicants may use?**

A budget template for proposals has been posted on the FAIS home page. (Budget Summary Template for Applicants (.xls) found on <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/fais/public>)

**115. Page 100 of the solicitation indicates that Professional Services under Admin "could include subrecipients, but they are generally included under activities" while page 101 indicates that "most subrecipients will be included here" as Professional Services under Activities. Can USDA clarify whether subrecipient administrative costs should be budgeted under Admin or allocated to Activities? If all sub costs should be allocated to activities, would this preclude prime recipients issuing subawards prior to monetization or giving CCC funds to subrecipients?**

Subrecipient costs should be captured within the activity in which they are working. The subrecipient costs should be within the activity's 'professional services' category.

**116. As the USDA cost categories have been revised from last year, can USDA specify under which of the FY2017 cost categories each of the following types of costs should be budgeted: Costs of trainings/ meetings/ workshops/events (venues, refreshments, etc), Small grants to beneficiaries, Vehicle insurance, Vehicle/Driver Hires.**

Costs for trainings/meetings/workshops/events should be within the respective activity's 'professional services' budget.

Small grants to beneficiaries should be a part of the activity's 'other' category.

Vehicle insurance: The insurance should be placed in the equipment category along with the other vehicle costs. If the vehicle cost is covered as a part of the administration 'equipment' line item, the insurance should be also. If the vehicle is associated with a specific activity's 'equipment' category, the insurance should be included within the activity's 'equipment' category.

Vehicle/Driver Hires: If a driver is an employee of the organization and driving for the general operations of the award, their cost can be included within Administrative

‘salaries’ category. If the driver is hired through a contract, they should be included within the Administration ‘professional services’ category. If the driver is needed in association with a certain activity only, their time should be included within that activity in either the ‘salary’ category if they are an employee or ‘professional services’ if they’re under contract.

- 117. What are the determining factors for making a country a priority country? Can a net exported country be a priority country? Also, what would be the right term for a country developing a “safety net” of food supplies for its vulnerable citizens?**

Country selection was already addressed (please see response #10). The relevance of this question is unclear; the priority countries have already been determined.

- 118. On p. 15, the Notice states that independent third party evaluator must be “financially and legally separate from the participant’s organization.” Suppose another organization is contracted to the recipient to carry out activities unrelated to the evaluation as part of the recipient’s FFPr grant. Would that organization still be eligible to serve as the independent third party evaluator for the recipient’s FFPr grant?**

The purpose for this statement of financial and legal separation is meant avoid conflict of interest issues. An organization which is involved in completing the activity objectives could raise concerns about bias and conflict of interest if they were also to be awarded an evaluation contract. Evaluators should not be involved in other aspects of the award.

- 119. Is it allowed to have the midterm and final evaluation costs spread proportionately over the activities, since the midterm and final evaluations measure impacts of all program activities? In searching the Notice, it is not clear that the midterm and final evaluation costs (ie consultant fees, consultant travel, data collector training, in-country costs to conduct the evaluation) are allowed to be put under Activities.**

Please refer to Appendix G of the solicitations, and page 2 of the Budget Narrative Example published on FAIS. These sections state that the three evaluations conducted over the life of the award are to be included in the Administration cost category as Professional Services. ([Budget Narrative Example](#) is a PDF posted on the FAIS Web site)

- 120. The NoFO states that applicants “should include past performance records (PPR) for no more than two grants or contracts implemented by the organization” (page 13) and that “if the education and literacy activity is conducted by a sub-contractor or subrecipient, submission of the sub-contractor or subrecipient’s relevant past performance is strongly encouraged” (page 17). USDA’s response to Question 24 says, “Submit PPRs only for the prime organization...” and “The limit of three PPRs references the main applicant’s past work, not subrecipient’s past work.” There is disagreement between the answer to Question 24. and the NoFO. Is the limit *two* or *three* PPRs, should prime AND subrecipient submit these, and how many should each recipient (prime and sub) submit?**

For past performance records, the requirements differ between programs. For proposals for the Food for Progress program, please refer to page 9 of the NoFO which states a limit of “no more than three” past performance references for the prime organization. For the McGovern-Dole program, the guidance on page 13 states “no more than two grants or contracts” and gives preference to past performance records of the prime applicant; if the literacy component will be conducted by a subrecipient, then a past performance report from the proposed subrecipient is “strongly encouraged.” (Also see Question 24.)